

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

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DRAFTED BY NEA/P:MKBERRY:RGH

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S/PRS - MR. FUNSETH (INFO)

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EUR/P - MR. JERABEK

IO/P - MR. BLACHLY

SSM - MS. GREEN

NEA/ARP - MR. DICKMAN

AF/P - MR. POPE

NEA - MS. GRIFFIN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY ROME

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USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY SANA

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
USMISSION SINAI
CINCEUR

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GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL, CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING

FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS
FROM DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S PRESS BRIEFING FOR APRIL 14,
1976:

Q. -- I'M REFERRING TO A STORY IN THE LONDON TIMES --
ABOUT THE JORDANIAN PRIME MINISTER RIFA'I SAYING THAT
JORDAN HAS ABANDONED PLANS TO PURCHASE AIR DEFENSE SYSTEMS
FROM THE US NOW AND INTENDS TO SEEK THEM FROM THE SOVIET
UNION BECAUSE OF CONGRESSIONAL DELAY AND UPPING OF PRICE.
DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING ON THAT, PLEASE?

A. I AM NOT AWARE OF THIS REPORT AND I CHECKED INTO IT
THIS MORNING. I AM TOLD THAT AS FAR AS WE ARE CONCERNED,
THE TRANSACTION IS STILL VERY MUCH ALIVE. AND ALTHOUGH
IT'S TRUE THE FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS HAVE PROVED COMPLICA-
TED AND MORE TIME-CONSUMING THAN WE HAD ANTICIPATED, WE
ARE CONTINUING OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH BOTH JORDAN AND
SAUDI ARABIA ABOUT IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS AIR DEFENSE
PROGRAM.

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YOU WILL RECALL THAT THERE WERE SOME LETTERS OF
OFFER PERTAINING TO THIS U.S. EQUIPMENT THAT WERE
SIGNED SOME MONTHS AGO.

Q. WHAT SPECIAL DISPENSATION IS REQUIRED FOR KING
HUSSEIN TO CARRY A GUN WHILE HE'S IN THE UNITED STATES?
AND IS THE STATE DEPARTMENT AWARE THAT HE WAS WEARING ONE
IN HIS BELT IN A PHOTOGRAPH PUBLISHED TODAY?

A. I THINK THAT PHOTOGRAPH SHOWED THE KING IN
CANADA.

Q. DID HE HAVE IT WHILE HE WAS HERE?

A. I DO NOT KNOW.

Q. WOULD JORDAN BECOME INELIGIBLE FOR U.S. SECURITY SUPPORT ASSISTANCE IF IT ENTERED INTO A MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOVIET UNION?

A. AS FAR AS WE ARE CONCERNED ON THE HAWK, THAT TRANSACTION IS STILL ALIVE. ALL I KNOW ABOUT POSSIBLE OTHER ARRANGEMENTS ARE THAT I HAVE SEEN IN THE PRESS. I DO NOT REALLY THINK I SHOULD SPECULATE ON THEM.

Q. BUT JUST IN GENERAL, DOES N'T U.S. LAW REQUIRE THAT A COUNTRY THAT RECEIVES OR USES ITS FUNDS TO BUY EQUIPMENT FROM THE SOVIET UNION CANNOT STILL RECEIVE U.S. SECURITY SUPPORT ASSISTANCE?

A. THERE PROBABLY WOULD BE LEGAL CONSTRAINTS IN SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT, BUT I WOULD RATHER NOT SPECULATE ON SOMETHING THAT HAS NOT HAPPENED. OBVIOUSLY ANY ARRANGEMENT WE HAD WITH ANY COUNTRY WOULD BE DETERMINED BY PERTINENT LEGISLATION.

Q. YOU MENTIONED IN EFFECT SOME PROBLEMS THAT AROSE THAT HAVE MADE THE COMPLETION OF THIS TRANSACTION MORE DIFFICULT. CAN YOU TELL US WHAT THOSE PROBLEMS ARE?

A. I THINK IT IS PRIMARILY SOME OF THE FINANCIAL
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ARRANGEMENTS AND THE PAYING FOR IT.

Q. ISN'T THAT MORE OF A PROBLEM BETWEEN THE JORDANIANS AND THE SAUDIS THAN BETWEEN THE JORDANIANS AND THE UNITED STATES?

A. WE HAVE TALKED WITH BOTH THE JORDANIANS AND THE SAUDIS ON THIS ARRANGEMENT.

Q. WELL, THAT DOESN'T ANSWER MY QUESTION. I SAID, "ISN'T THE PROBLEM REALLY BETWEEN THE SAUDIS AND THE JORDANIANS RATHER THAN THE JORDANIANS AND THE UNITED STATES ON THE COST?"

A. I UNDERSTAND THAT IN THIS PARTICULAR TRANSACTION WE HAVE ALSO BEEN DISCUSSING THE FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PURCHASE OF THIS BY JORDAN WITH THE SAUDI ARABIANS, SO WE HAVE TALKED TO THE SAUDIS ABOUT IT.

Q. MAY I ASK YOU: THIS TRANSACTION IS VERY MUCH ALIVE AS OF WHEN?

A. AS OF THIS MORNING.

Q. WHEN IS THE LAST CONTACT THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAS HAD WITH JORDAN ON THE VIABILITY OF THIS ARRANGEMENT? IN OTHER WORDS, WHAT I'M TRYING TO GET AT: HAS THE RIFA'I INTERVIEW -- HAS THAT OVERTAKEN WHAT YOU KNOW?

A. IT WAS IN LIGHT OF HIS INTERVIEW THAT I CHECKED THIS MORNING. SO THE INFORMATION I HAVE IS CURRENT AS OF NOW AS FAR AS WE ARE CONCERNED.

Q. DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY HAWK BATTERIES ARE STILL ALIVE?

A. I DO NOT THINK THERE HAS BEEN ANY CHANGE IN THE ORIGINAL --

Q. FOURTEEN.

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A. -- FOURTEEN, BUT LET ME CHECK ON THAT.

Q. CAN I ASK A QUESTION ABOUT WHAT ARE WE TALKING TO THE SAUDIS ABOUT -- ARE WE ENCOURAGING THE SAUDIS TO PICK UP THE CHECK?

A. IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT THE SAUDIS ARE ASSISTING THE JORDANIANS ON PAYING FOR THIS. AND, THEREFORE, WE HAVE BEEN DISCUSSING BOTH WITH THE JORDANIANS AND THE SAUDIS THE COST OF THIS SYSTEM.

Q. WELL, IN OTHER WORDS, WHAT IS THE UNITED STATES POSITION? ARE WE ENCOURAGING THE SAUDIS TO PICK UP THE TOTAL BILL THAT WE HAVE SUGGESTED FOR THIS?

Q. YOU MEAN ARE WE STILL FAVORING THE TRANSACTION?

Q. ARE WE URGING THE SAUDIS TO USE THE MONEY?

A. I DO NOT KNOW WHETHER TO CHARACTERIZE IT AS "ENCOURAGING" OR "URGING." CERTAINLY THE PURCHASE OF THE SYSTEM WAS DISCUSSED BY BOTH THE JORDANIAN GOVERNMENT AND OUR GOVERNMENT, AND WE AGREED TO PROVIDE THIS. THE SAUDIS WERE TO PROVIDE THE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, AND WE HAVE BEEN DISCUSSING WITH THE SAUDIS THAT ASPECT OF THE PROBLEM. BUT I AM NOT IN A POSITION HERE TO CHARACTERIZE WHETHER WE ARE URGING OR ENCOURAGING.

Q. WAS THERE ANY CHANGE IN THE PRICE? WHAT WAS THE ORIGINAL PRICE -- MAY I ASK YOU THAT?

A. I DO NOT KNOW, AND I AM NOT SO SURE THAT THE COST
ON THAT PACKAGE IS SOMETHING THAT WE HAVE DISCUSSED, BUT
LET ME CHECK INTO THAT.

Q. ALONG THAT SAME LINE, ARE WE CONSIDERING REDUCING
OR ABSORBING SOME OF THE COST OURSELVES --
CHANGING OF PRICE, PARTICULARLY ON THE ANCILLARY ITEMS?

A. I DO NOT THINK SO, BUT LET ME CHECK INTO THAT. I
JUST HONESTLY DO NOT KNOW.

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Q. CAN YOU TELL US THE DIMENSIONS OF THE SYRIAN MILITARY
STRENGTH NOW INSIDE LEBANON, PLEASE? HAVE WE
PROTESTED?

A. I CANNOT. I DO NOT KNOW HOW PRECISE I CAN BE. I
THINK THE SECRETARY ALSO INDICATED THIS MORNING THAT
THERE WERE SOME LIMITED MOVEMENTS OVER THE WEEKEND
OF MILITARY ELEMENTS BUT CONFINED TO THE SYRIAN-LEBANESE
BORDER AREA.

Q. THAT IS INTO LEBANON?

A. INTO LEBANON.

Q. HAVE WE PROTESTED --

A. WE ARE WATCHING THE SITUATION -- OR CONTINUE TO WATCH
IT -- VERY CLOSELY. WE HAVE COUNSELED AGAINST ANY
UNILATERAL MILITARY INTERVENTION IN LEBANON, AN ACTION
WHICH WE BELIEVE WOULD INVOLVE SERIOUS RISKS FOR
STABILITY IN THE AREA.

YOU STARTED TO ASK WHETHER WE PROTESTED. I DO NOT KNOW
THE NATURE OF OUR DIPLOMATIC EXCHANGES WITH THE
INTERESTED PARTIES; BUT WE HAVE BEEN, AND CONTINUE TO
BE, IN VERY CLOSE TOUCH WITH ALL INTERESTED PARTIES.

Q. HIS FIRST QUESTION WAS "HOW MANY ARE IN THERE?" AND
THE SECRETARY --

A. I SAID I ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HE HAD ASKED FOR A
PRECISE REPLY WHICH I WAS NOT ABLE TO PROVIDE.

Q. THE SECRETARY TESTIFIED THIS MORNING THAT THE
FIGURE OF 15,000 IS EXAGGERATED, THAT BOTH THE U.S. AND
ISRAEL AGREED, AND THAT IT'S FAR LESS THAN THAT.

A. YES.

Q. CAN YOU GIVE US A ROUND NUMBER FIGURE?

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A. NO. I DO NOT HAVE IT.

Q. IS THIS A UNILATERAL INTERVENTION BY SYRIA?

A. I THINK I WILL HAVE TO JUST CHARACTERIZE IT THE WAY I DID INITIALLY -- THAT THERE HAD BEEN SOME LIMITED MOVEMENTS OVER THE WEEKEND CONFINED IN THE SYRIAN-LEBANESE BORDER AREA AND WE CONTINUE TO BE OPPOSED TO ANY UNILATERAL ACTION.

Q. AREN'T YOU REDEFINING THE SITUATION TO ALLOW A BACK-DOWN OF THE AMERICAN POSITION TO THE OPPOSITION SO YOU CAN STILL OPPOSE A UNILATERAL INTERVENTION AND NOT CALL THIS ONE?

A. NO. I AM NOT PREPARED TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT AT THIS POINT.

THE SECRETARY, ALSO -- I DO NOT HAVE HIS EXACT WORDS -- BUT HE MADE SOME REFERENCE TO THE EXTENT OF THESE LIMITED MOVES; AND I WOULD LIKE TO FIND HIS EXACT LANGUAGE ON IT THIS MORNING.

Q. YOU SAID THAT WE COUNSELED AGAINST ANY UNILATERAL MILITARY ACTION, AND I'D SUGGEST THAT YOUR WORDS IN THE PAST FROM THIS PODIUM ARE MUCH STRONGER THAN "COUNSEL." AND DO YOU VIEW UNILATERAL MILITARY INTERVENTION IN THE SAME SERIOUS NATURE THAT YOU DID TWO WEEKS AGO?

A. YES, SIR. AND I THINK --

Q. BUT YOU'RE NOT WILLING TO CALL THIS A UNILATERAL MILITARY INTERVENTION. DID THE LEBANESE INVITE THEM IN?

A. I'M NOT PREPARED TO ANSWER THAT QUESTION.

Q. THE RECORD HERE, OF COURSE, HAS GONE, AS YOU WELL KNOW, BECAUSE YOU'VE BEEN STATING IT, FROM NO CONFIRMED EVIDENCE OF ANY SYRIANS IN LEBANON TO SOMETHING LESS THAN EITHER 13,000 OR 15,000. WOULD YOU ATTEMPT TO ASCERTAIN
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SOMETHING AS TO WHAT THE SITUATION IS FROM THE UNITED STATES PERCEPTION, BETWEEN ZERO AND 15,000?

A. I WILL SEE IF I CAN GO BEYOND DESCRIBING IT AS "LIMITED MOVEMENT."

Q. CAN I ASK YOU ON THE SAME STATISTICAL HEADING -- IN
WHAT DIMENSIONS HAVE THE SYRIAN TROOPS MOVED INTO
LEBANON?

YOU'RE SAYING ACROSS THE BORDER. HOW FAR IN, PLEASE?

A. CONFINED TO THE BORDER AREA. I DO NOT KNOW THE
EXTENT.

Q. THAT WAS THE WEEKEND, THOUGH, YOU WERE TALKING
ABOUT OR IS THAT ALL SYRIANS?

A. THAT WAS MY UNDERSTANDING. I HAVE BEEN INFORMED
THAT THESE LIMITED MOVEMENTS TOOK PLACE PRIMARILY
OVER THE WEEKEND. I DO NOT KNOW OF ANYTHING WITHIN THE
LAST 24 HOURS.

Q. THE SECRETARY ALSO SAID THIS MORNING THAT THESE
SYRIAN MILITARY FORCES HAVE NOW APPROACHED WHAT HE
REFERRED TO AS THE "BORDERLINE" -- APPARENTLY NOT
MEANING A GEOGRAPHICAL THING EXACTLY BUT A THRESHOLD OF
ISRAELI TOLERANCE FOR IT. WHAT IS THE BORDERLINE IN THAT
CONTEXT? IS THERE A RIVER THEY MAY NOT GO SOUTH OF, OR
A DISTANCE THEY MAY NOT PENETRATE, OR IS THERE A NUMBER
THEY MAY NOT REACH?

A. I AM NOT ABLE TO DEFINE THAT. I HAD UNDERSTOOD THE
SECRETARY HAD SAID SOMETHING ALONG THE LINES THAT JERRY
HAS JUST REPEATED, AND IT WAS THAT RESPONSE BY THE
SECRETARY THAT I WAS REFERRING TO IN ATTEMPTING TO
ANSWER YOUR QUESTION.

Q. I DON'T THINK IT DOES ANSWER THE QUESTION, AND I
WISH YOU'D GO BACK FOR FURTHER GUIDANCE.

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A. O.K.

Q. WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT U.S. SHIP MOVEMENTS OFF
LEBANON?

A. I UNDERSTAND THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT PROVIDED SOME
INFORMATION YESTERDAY ON THE PRESENCE OF U.S. NAVAL
UNITS IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN. I DO NOT HAVE
ANYTHING BEYOND THAT.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY EVIDENCE OF SYRIAN TANKS INSIDE THE
LEBANESE BORDER?

A. I THINK I WILL CONFINE MYSELF TO THE STATEMENT I
MADE AT THE BEGINNING THAT THERE HAVE BEEN SOME LIMITED

MOVEMENTS OVER THE WEEKEND. I AM NOT IN A POSITION TO DESCRIBE --

Q. WHAT IS THE REASON FOR YOUR NOT BEING MORE FORTH-COMING WITH INFORMATION IF YOU HAVE THAT INFORMATION?

A. I THINK THE SITUATION IN LEBANON OBVIOUSLY IS VERY COMPLICATED. WE ARE IN A VERY DELICATE PERIOD FOLLOWING THE ENCOURAGING ACTION BY THE LEBANESE PARLIAMENT ON SATURDAY. I THINK IT IS WISE FOR US TO BE VERY PRUDENT IN WHAT WE SAY. I HAVE INDICATED THAT

WE ARE IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH ALL OF THE INTERESTED PARTIES, AND THAT WE ARE FOLLOWING THE SITUATION VERY CAREFULLY. WE CONTINUE OUR EFFORTS, PARTICULARLY THROUGH AMBASSADOR BROWN, TO TRY TO SUPPORT CONSTRUCTIVE EFFORTS BY THE PARTIES IN LEBANON TO REACH A POLITICAL SOLUTION IN LEBANON.

Q. I WOULD LIKE TO FOLLOW THAT UP. WE HAVE HEARD YOU ENUNCIATE A HANDS-OFF POLICY IN THE WAY OF OUTSIDE MILITARY INTERVENTION IN LEBANON FOR THE PAST FEW WEEKS. NOW, EVEN BY THE INFORMATION, THE SKIMPY INFORMATION, THAT YOU ARE PREPARED TO SHARE WITH US, THERE HAS BEEN A REPUDIATION OF THAT U.S. ADVICE.

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A. I WOULD LIKE TO SEE EXACTLY WHAT THE SECRETARY SAID THIS MORNING. BUT, AS JERRY BROUGHT UP IN THE BRIEFING, THE SECRETARY SUGGESTED THAT THESE LIMITED MOVEMENTS APPROACH THE BORDERLINE, AND I THINK THAT REALLY --

Q. HE MAKES THE SUGGESTION, OR MADE IT THIS MORNING, THAT THERE IS A DISTANT SET OF CIRCUMSTANCES THAT SYRIA CAN MEET AND A SET THAT THEY CANNOT MEET. HE SAID BOTH WE AND THE ISRAELIS AGREE THAT THE SYRIAN MOVEMENTS SO FAR DO NOT REPRESENT ANY THREAT TO ISRAEL. AND WHAT IS THE CONFIGURATION OF WHAT WOULD REPRESENT A THREAT?

A. I AM JUST NOT ABLE TO DEFINE THAT FOR YOU. I JUST WANT TO EMPHASIZE THAT WE ARE WATCHING THAT SITUATION VERY CLOSELY, AND WE ARE IN VERY CLOSE TOUCH WITH ALL OF THE PARTIES.

Q. CAN YOU BE MORE SPECIFIC ABOUT THE BORDER YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT, WHERE ON THE BORDER OR NEAR THE BORDER ARE THESE SYRIAN TROOPS?

A. I DO NOT KNOW THE EXTENT OF THE PRESENCE. I WAS TOLD THIS MORNING THAT IT WAS CONFINED TO THE BORDER

AREA.

Q. THE BORDER AREA IS NOT A COUPLE OF MILES THERE. CAN YOU GET A MORE EXACT FIX?

A. I WILL SEE THAT I CAN GET.

Q. ARE YOU STILL DENYING THAT THE UNITED STATES IS RELAYING INFORMATION OR ACTING AS A GO-BETWEEN BETWEEN SYRIA AND ISRAEL ON WHAT SYRIA DOES AND MAY DO AND WHAT ISRAEL WILL ACCEPT AND WILL NOT ACCEPT?

A. ALL I AM GOING TO SAY ABOUT OUR DIPLOMATIC EXCHANGES IN THE AREA IS THAT WE ARE IN VERY CLOSE TOUCH WITH ALL OF THE PARTIES.

Q. ARE WE PREPARED TO IMPOSE ANY SANCTIONS AGAINST ANY UNCLASSIFIED

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COUNTRIES THAT VIOLATE THE STATED POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES THAT IT OPPOSES INTERVENTION BY OUTSIDE PARTIES?

A. I AM JUST NOT IN A POSITION TO SPECULATE ON WHAT OUR MOVES MIGHT BE IF SOMETHING HAPPENS. WHAT I WANT TO EMPHASIZE IS THAT WE ARE WATCHING THE SITUATION VERY CLOSELY; WE ARE IN VERY CLOSE TOUCH WITH THE PARTIES; AND WE ARE CONTINUING OUR EFFORTS IN LEBANON, PARTICULARLY THROUGH AMBASSADOR BROWN, TO BRING ABOUT A POLITICAL SOLUTION.

Q. DOES "ALL PARTIES" INCLUDE THE PLO?

A. NO, IT DOES NOT. WE ARE NOT IN TOUCH WITH THE PLO.

Q. NEITHER DIRECTLY NOR INDIRECTLY THROUGH THIRD PARTIES?

A. WE ARE NOT IN TOUCH WITH THEM. NOW, HOW DO YOU DEFINE INDIRECT? IS THE PLO AWARE OF OUR VIEWS? OF COURSE THEY ARE AWARE OF OUR VIEWS. WE ARE STATING THEM PUBLICLY. WE HAVE TOLD ALL THE PEOPLE WITH WHOM WE ARE IN TOUCH. SO I ASSUME THAT THE PARTIES THAT WE ARE NOT IN TOUCH WITH KNOW WHAT OUR BASIC POSITION IS.

Q. WITHOUT REGARD TO WHAT THE UNITED STATES TELLS ISRAEL, DOES SYRIA NOTIFY US IN ADVANCE BEFORE IT SENDS CERTAIN TROOPS CERTAIN DISTANCES IN LEBANON?

A. I AM JUST NOT ABLE TO GET INTO OUR DIPLOMATIC EXCHANGES WITH SYRIA, ISRAEL, AND OTHER PARTIES IN THE AREA.

Q. IS THAT A DENIAL OR JUST NO ANSWER?

A. IT IS NO ANSWER.

Q. DO YOU MEAN TO LEAVE OPEN THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE UNITED STATES MIGHT IMPOSE SANCTIONS AGAINST SYRIA?

A. NO, BUT, IN A GENERAL WAY, I DO NOT WISH TO SPECULATE ON WHAT ACTIONS THE UNITED STATES WOULD TAKE
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IN THE FUTURE UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES THAT WE HAVEN'T SEEN.
I JUST DO NOT WANT TO SPECULATE.

Q. THERE COULD BE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT WOULD LEAD TO AMERICAN SANCTIONS OF SOME NATURE THEN?

A. I REALLY DO NOT WANT TO SUGGEST, OR BE LED INTO SUGGESTING BY NOT COMMENTING, THAT WE MIGHT TAKE THIS STEP OR THAT STEP. I REALLY --

Q. IF IT IS NOT A POSSIBILITY, YOU COULD SIMPLY SAY IT IS NOT A POSSIBILITY AND SET IT ALL TO REST.

A. YES, BUT THEN THERE WOULD BE A QUESTION AFTER THAT ABOUT ANOTHER POSSIBILITY, AND I AM JUST NOT GOING TO -- AND FOR THAT REASON I AM NOT GOING TO COMMENT ON SPECULATIVE MOVES ON SITUATIONS THAT HAVEN'T UNFOLDED AS YET.

Q. WHAT DID THE SECRETARY MEAN THIS MORNING WHEN HE SAID

THAT THE SYRIANS WERE VERY CLOSE TO THE BORDERLINE? THE BORDERLINE OF WHAT? HE DIDN'T SAY.

A. LET ME ASK THE SECRETARY WHAT HE MEANT.

Q. YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT HE MEANT?

A. I WILL ASK THE SECRETARY.

Q. THE WAY YOU ANALYZE IT, WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE SYRIAN MILITARY INTERVENTION?

A. I DO NOT WANT TO GET INTO TRYING TO ANALYZE OR EXPLAIN THE MOVEMENTS BY OTHER COUNTRIES OR ACTIONS BY OTHER COUNTRIES.

Q. IN YOUR CONSTANT REFERENCE TO THE MOVEMENT OF TROOPS AT THE WEEKEND, ARE YOU TRYING TO SUGGEST THERE HAVEN'T
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BEEN ANY SYRIAN TROOPS GOING INTO LEBANON BEFORE THE WEEKEND?

A. BUT MY INFORMATION WHEN I ASKED THIS MORNING WAS THAT THERE HAVE BEEN SOME LIMITED MOVEMENTS OVER THE WEEKEND, AND THAT IS WHAT I AM ANSWERING PRECISELY.

Q. WELL, HAVE THERE BEEN MOVEMENTS BEFORE THAT? AND IF SO, TO WHAT EXTENT?

A. I DO NOT HAVE THE INFORMATION ON THAT. PRIOR TO LAST WEEK WE DIDN'T HAVE CONFIRMED EVIDENCE OF ANY ENTRY OF SYRIANS. AT THE SAME TIME, AS EVERYONE KNOWS, THE SITUATION, ESPECIALLY IN THE SECURITY AREA, IS VERY COMPLICATED IN LEBANON.

Q. ARE THESE SYRIAN OFFICERS OR MEN ATTACHED TO THE SA'QA FORCE THAT WENT IN SEVERAL MONTHS AGO?

A. I DO NOT KNOW.

Q. YOU SAY THAT PRIOR TO LAST WEEKEND YOU DIDN'T HAVE CONFIRMED EVIDENCE OF THE SYRIAN ENTRY. ISN'T IT A FACT THAT THE SECRETARY, AS WIDELY REPORTED, TOLD THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE LAST WEEK THAT THERE WERE A THOUSAND SYRIAN TROOPS GOING INTO LEBANON?

A. I AM NOT AWARE OF THAT TESTIMONY, I WOULD HAVE TO CHECK.

Q. WAS THE UNITED STATES AWARE OF THE SYRIAN PLAN TO PUT THE TROOPS INTO LEBANON BEFORE THE MOVES WERE TAKEN?

A. I DO NOT KNOW THE ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION. BUT AGAIN I RETURN TO MY GENERAL RESPONSE: THAT I DO NOT THINK WE ARE PREPARED TO GET INTO THE SUBSTANCE OF OUR DIPLOMATIC EXCHANGES.

Q. IS IT A FAIR ASSESSMENT TO SAY THAT THE U.S. DOES NOT DISAPPROVE THE SYRIAN INTERVENTION?

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A.. I THINK I HAVE TO REPEAT WHAT I SAID EARLIER AND NOT ANSWER YOUR QUESTION DIRECTLY BUT JUST TO SAY THAT WE ARE WATCHING THE SITUATION VERY CLOSELY.

Q. TAKING YOU BACK TO LEBANON, TODAY BEING WEDNESDAY AND THE SYRIAN TROOP MOVEMENT THAT YOU ARE DISCLOSING FOR THE FIRST TIME FROM THAT PODIUM HAVING TAKEN PLACE OVER THE WEEKEND, WHY HAVE YOU WAITED UNTIL WEDNESDAY

AND WHY HAVE YOU WAIT UNTIL AFTER THE SECRETARY IF YOU HAD THIS INFORMATION EARLIER? IT GOES BACK TO LARS' OPENING QUESTION HERE. THAT HAS BEEN A REGULAR QUESTION THAT HAS COME UP AT THE BRIEFING ABOUT SYRIAN TROOP MOVEMENTS. YOUR ANSWER HERETOFORE HAS BEEN, "NO HARD EVIDENCE." NOW YOU ARE SAYING FOR THE FIRST TIME THAT IN FACT THAT HAS HAPPENED. BUT LARS HAS RAISED THE QUESTION, THE POINT, THAT WHEN A QUESTION PERCOLATES WE WOULD LOOK TO YOU TO ANSWER THAT WHEN YOU IN FACT HAVE AN ANSWER. TODAY IS WEDNESDAY. THE MOVEMENTS TOOK PLACE OVER THE WEEKEND.

A. I DO NOT KNOW WHEN WE HAD THAT INFORMATION AVAILABLE. THERE WAS A BRIEFING MONDAY. I DON'T KNOW WHETHER WE KNEW AT THE TIME OF THE BRIEFING OR WHETHER IT WAS ASKED. I WASN'T HERE. AND THERE WASN'T A BRIEFING YESTERDAY.

Q. AT THE RISK OF REPETITION, WHY ARE YOU DOWNPLAYING THE SYRIAN MILITARY INTERVENTION GIVEN THE FACT THAT SO MANY WARNINGS ABOUT HANDS OFF HAVE EMANATED FROM THAT PODIUM?

A. I REALLY CANNOT SAY MORE THAN I HAVE SAID ALREADY THIS MORNING AND MORE THAN THE WAY THE SECRETARY HAS CHARACTERIZED IT ON THE HILL. I JUST REALLY CAN'T ADD ANYTHING MORE ON THE SITUATION THAN WHAT I HAVE ALREADY

SAID THIS MORNING DURING THE COURSE OF THIS BRIEFING.

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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BEIRUT
CAIRO
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GENEVA

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KUWAIT
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